

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated July 23, 2007. Claims 1 to 4 and 6, 7, 10, 11 and 13 to 20 remain pending in the application, with Claims 8, 9 and 12 having been cancelled herein. Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 20 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 4 and 6 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101. The rejections are respectfully traversed. In this regard, the Office Action alleged that the claims recite various instances of transmitting a signal or command and that such “signals” are not statutory. While Applicant understands that merely claiming electrical signals themselves may constitute non-statutory subject matter, the Office Action misses the point of the claimed invention. Specifically, while the claims may include the recitation of transmitting various signals, the invention being claimed is a statutory process or apparatus in which the transmission of the signals takes place and results in a concrete, tangible result. As can be seen from, for example, Claim 1, the claimed method recites that a first node transmits a search signal that includes information representing technical features of a host, a second node in the network identifies a candidate host based on the search signal, and then if the host proves to be one that is actuated, the first node sends operating commands to the candidate host and the search is interrupted. Alternatively, if the host does not prove to be one that is actuated, the search is continued. Thus, it can clearly be seen that Applicant is not claiming a signal, but rather, a process of transmitting signals and commands that results in a concrete result. Therefore, the claims are very clearly statutory under § 101.

Claims 1 to 4 and 6 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by “IRC-38 Infrared Receiver Product Information” (IRC-38). The rejections are respectfully traversed and the Examiner is requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in light of the following comments.

The invention concerns a communication network of interconnected nodes in a sub-network that convey digital signals, and a plurality of hosts that exchange data via the sub-network, where the nodes have an interface for exchanging data and operating commands with hosts to which they are connected. In the invention, a first node transmits a search signal to a second node of the sub-network, where the search signal contains information representing technical features of a host to be actuated from the first node. A candidate host, that is connected to the second node and that has technical features compatible with the technical features contained in the search signal is identified. Then, if the candidate host proves not to be the host to be actuated, a search signal is transmitted once again in order to continue the search. On the other hand, if the host does prove to be the host to be actuated, operating commands are sent to the candidate host by means of a control interface of the second, and the search is interrupted.

Referring specifically to the claims, Claim 1 is directed to a method of managing a communication network comprising a sub-network having communication nodes interconnected by links conveying digital signals, and a plurality of hosts, said hosts being able to exchange data via the sub-network, said communication nodes comprising data and control interfaces for exchanging data and operating commands with hosts to which said communication nodes are connected, the method comprising the steps of transmitting a search signal from a first communication node to a second communication

node of the sub-network, said search signal containing information representing technical features of a host to be actuated from said first communication node, the transmission being performed in accordance with instructions from a remote control, and identifying a candidate host, that is connected to said second communication node and that has technical features compatible with the technical features contained in the search signal, wherein, if said candidate host proves not to be the host to be actuated, a search signal is transmitted once again in order to continue the search, whereas, if said host does prove to be the host to be actuated, operating commands are sent to said candidate host by means of the control interface of the second communication node, and the search is interrupted.

Claim 11 is a computer medium claim that substantially corresponds to method Claim 1.

Claim 6 is directed to the second node of Claim 1, while Claim 7 is directed to the first node of Claim 1. Specifically, Claim 6 is directed to a communication node that forms part of a communication network comprising a sub-network having communication nodes interconnected by links conveying digital signals, and a plurality of hosts able to exchange data via the sub-network, the node comprising, at least one data interface for connection to a host to exchange signals, at least one control interface to transmit operating commands to the host, and a unit for supplying signals representing the operating commands received from at least one other node to the control interface, wherein the unit supplies the signals if the data interface connected to the host has technical features identified in a search signal received from another node, and wherein, if the data interface connected to the host does not have the technical features identified in a search

signal received from another node, the unit transmits the search signal once again on the sub-network.

Claim 7 is directed to a communication node that forms part of a communication network comprising a sub-network having communication nodes interconnected by links conveying digital signals, and a plurality of hosts to exchange data via the sub-network, the node comprising, at least one receiver to receive operating commands intended for any host in the network, and a unit to produce signals representing the operating commands and being transmitted to other nodes, wherein the unit produces the signals based on a technical feature of the host to transmit a search signal once again when the technical feature is not identified in the search signal.

Claim 13 is also directed to the second node aspect of Claim 1, and is specifically directed to a communication node that forms part of a communication network comprising a sub-network consisting of communication nodes interconnected by links conveying signals, and a plurality of hosts being able to exchange data via the sub-network, said node comprising comparing means for comparing technical features indicated in a received search signal with technical features of a host to which said node is connected, and a control interface that starts up and operates said host based on a comparison result by the comparing means and transmits the search signal once again on the sub-network when the comparing means determines that the technical features indicated in the received search signal are different from the technical features of the host.

Claim 15 is also directed to the first node aspect of Claim 1, and specifically, is directed to a communication node that forms part of a communication network comprising a sub-network consisting of communication nodes interconnected by

links conveying digital signals, and a plurality of hosts to exchange data via the sub-network, the node comprising, means for transmitting to all nodes in the network a search signal containing information representing technical features of a host to be actuated, means for determining when the search signal is transmitted again on the sub-network, and means for sending operating commands to the host to be actuated when the search signal is no longer transmitted again on the sub-network.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claim 1, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 15. As for Claims 1 and 11, the applied art is not seen to teach at least the features of transmitting a search signal from a first communication node to a second communication node of a sub-network, the search signal containing information representing technical features of a host to be actuated from the first communication node, identifying a candidate host, that is connected to the second communication node and that has technical features compatible with the technical features contained in the search signal, wherein, if the candidate host proves not to be the host to be actuated, a search signal is transmitted once again in order to continue the search, whereas, if the host does prove to be the host to be actuated, operating commands are sent to the candidate host by means of a control interface of the second communication node, and the search is interrupted.

With regard to Claim 6, the applied art is not seen to teach at least the features of a communication node having a unit for supplying signals representing operating commands received from at least one other node to a control interface, wherein the unit supplies the signals if a data interface connected to a host has technical features identified in a search signal received from another node, and wherein, if the data interface connected to the host does not have the technical features identified in a search signal

received from another node, the unit transmits a search signal once again on a sub-network.

With regard to Claim 7, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of a unit to produce signals representing operating commands and being transmitted to other nodes, wherein the unit produces the signals based on a technical feature of a host to transmit a search signal once again when the technical feature is not identified in the search signal.

With regard to Claim 13, the applied art is not seen to teach at least the features of a communication node having a comparing means for comparing technical features indicated in a received search signal with technical features of a host to which the node is connected, and a control interface that starts up and operates the host based on a comparison result by the comparing means and transmits the search signal once again on the sub-network when the comparing means determines that the technical features indicated in the received search signal are different from the technical features of the host.

Regarding Claim 15, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of a communication node having means for transmitting to all nodes in a network a search signal containing information representing technical features of a host to be actuated, means for determining when the search signal is transmitted again on the sub-network, and means for sending operating commands to the host to be actuated when the search signal is no longer transmitted again on the sub-network.

IRC-38 is seen to disclose a step of recognizing the type of an infrared code structures (Sony, NEC, RC5) so that those infrared codes can be converted into appropriate output signals for actuating a device to be controlled. IRC-38 discloses an example where the infrared receiver recognizes Sony's "power on" and thus converts this code to the

appropriate output signal (see page 1). However, IRC-38 is not seen to teach the foregoing features of any of Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 15.

Pages 8 and 9 of the Office Action asserts that IRC-38 (page 1) discloses the “identifying a candidate host, that is connected to said second communication node and that has technical features compatible with the technical features contained in the search signal; starting up said candidate host by means of the control interface of the second communication node to which the candidate host is connected, wherein, based on the result of the starting up, if said candidate host proves not to be the host to be actuated, a search signal is transmitted once again in order to continue the search, whereas, if the host does prove to be the host to be actuated, operating commands are sent to it by means of said control interface, which also interrupts the search. Specifically, the Office Action points to the use of an infrared remote control unit that sends codes that are converted by an infrared receiver into output signals as allegedly corresponding to the foregoing features. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this characterization since the infrared codes of IRC-38 are not seen to be related in any way to a search signal having technical features of a host to be actuated. That is, the invention clearly relates the identifying step and the functions performed thereafter with the transmitted search signal and the technical features contained therein. IRC-38 is merely seen to transmit remote control commands from a remote controller to an infrared receiver, whereby the remote control commands are converted into output signals to control the equipment. This is clearly not the same as the claimed invention. As such, Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 15, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are not believed to be anticipated.

Independent Claim 17 includes features along the lines of the foregoing independent claims, but is more specifically directed to a communication apparatus comprising a wireless communication means for wirelessly communicating with another wireless communication apparatus, a wired communication means for communicating with another apparatus, receiving means for receiving, by the wireless communication means, instruction signals for instructing to search for an apparatus possessing a predetermined technical feature, and searching means for searching, by the wired communication means, for an apparatus possessing the predetermined technical features based on the received instruction signal, wherein the searching means comprises requesting means for sending a request, through the wired communication means, to a distant apparatus to obtain information on a connected apparatus connected to the distant apparatus, and continuing searching means for continuing searching for an apparatus possessing the predetermined technical feature, the continuing searching means being activated as a function of a response to the request.

Claim 20 is directed to a method substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 17.

IRC-38 is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 17 and 20, and in particular is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of a communication node having a searching means for searching, by a wired communication means, for an apparatus possessing predetermined technical features based on a received instruction signal, wherein the searching means comprises requesting means for sending a request, through the wired communication means, to a distant apparatus to obtain information on a connected apparatus connected to the distant apparatus, and continuing

searching means for continuing searching for an apparatus possessing the predetermined technical feature, the continuing searching means being activated as a function of a response to the request.

Specifically, as noted above, IRC-38 is not seen to disclose or to suggest a search signal at all, much less the above-noted features.

Accordingly, Claims 17 and 20 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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